

MARKED UP VERSION OF AMENDED CLAIMS

1. (Amended) A sheath [(10)] of flexible material for close protection of products placed on a work surface and sensitive to airborne contamination, the protection being provided by diffusing a stream of sterile air, in particular in a direction that is substantially perpendicular to said work surface, said sheath [(10)] defining a sterile air feed duct [(13)] and presenting a geometrical singularity [(20)], the sheath being characterized in that a sterile air diffusion cone [(30)] is provided in said feed duct [(13)] immediately after said singularity [(20)] in the direction of sterile air flow in said duct [(13)], the diffusion cone being oriented in the sterile air flow direction and being centered on the longitudinal axis x of the sheath [(10)].

2. (Amended) A sheath [(10)] according to claim 1, characterized in that said diffusion cone [(30)] is truncated.

3. (Amended) A sheath [(10)] according to claim 1, characterized in that said diffusion cone [(30)] has an angle at the apex (α) lying in the range 30° to 45°, and preferably equal to about 45°.

4. (Amended) A sheath [(10)] according to [any one of claims 1 to 3] claim 1, characterized in that said diffusion cone [(30)] is made of a perforated flexible material, preferably a textile material.

6. (Amended) A sheath [(10)] according to [any one of claims 1 to 3] claim 1, characterized in that said diffusion cone [(30)] is made of a perforated rigid material.

7. (Amended) A sheath [(10)] according to [any one of claims 1 to 6] claim 4, characterized in that said material constituting the diffusion cone [(30)] has porosity of about 0.5.

8. (Amended) A sheath [(10)] according to [any one of claims 1 to 7] claim 1, characterized in that said diffusion cone [(30)] is secured to the end of a sleeve [(40)] positioned inside said sterile air feed duct [(13)] on the longitudinal axis x of the sheath and presenting a section that is slightly smaller than that of the sheath [(10)].

9. (Amended) A sheath [(10)] according to claim 8, characterized in that said sleeve [(40)] is made of a material that is less porous than the material of said diffusion cone [(30)].

10. (Amended) A sheath [(10)] according to claim 8 [or claim 9], characterized in that said sleeve [(40)] is made of a perforated flexible material such as a textile material such that under the action of the sterile air passing through it takes up an oval shape and comes into contact with the inside face of a wall [(11)] of the sheath [(10)].

11. (Amended) A sheath [(10)] according to [any one of claims 8 to 10] claim 8, characterized in that it includes a central branch connection constituted by a sterile air feed duct [(20)] opening out into said sheath [(10)] in a direction Y that is substantially perpendicular to the longitudinal axis of the sheath [(10)] such that at the outlet from said sterile air feed duct [(20)] the sterile air flows in two opposite directions generally along the longitudinal axis x of said sheath, the sheath being provided internally at the outlet from the branch connection with a diffusing sleeve [(40)] extending along the longitudinal axis x of the sheath [(10)] and having a diffusion cone [(30)] at each end [(41, 42)], the cones being oriented in the sterile air flow direction and centered on the longitudinal axis x of the sheath [(10)].